

The Rahul Dev Burman baton may have been associated overwhelmingly with Asha Bhosle, but there were areas

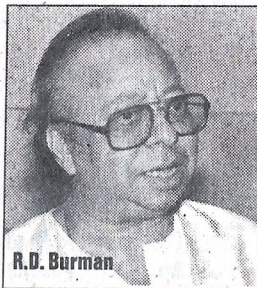
where the son, as disparate from the father as anyone could be, was in complete confluence with the senior Burman. Both shared their partisan love for Kishore Kumar, their regards for Majrooh Sultanpuri and Anand Bakshi, their instant tuning with Dev Anand, and the fact that despite their propensity for others, they could never, as shrewd composers, do injustice to Mohammed Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar.

Lata, let it be remembered, sang Pancham's first-ever officially recorded song *Ghar aaja ghir aaye badraa saawariya* (*Chhote Nawab*/1961), and the mercurial Dada Burman suddenly turned indulgent papa and forgot his six-year professional animus with the Nightingale to enable this to happen.

From here to *Libaas*'s splendid *Sili hawaa chhoo gayi* (1993) was a tuneful journey indeed — one does not include the controversial *Kuchh na kaho* from

1942-*A Love Story* for obvious reasons. Lata's *Pancham sur*, so to speak, may have lacked the utter range and sustained excellence of her work under Shaker-Jaikishan, Laxmikant-Pyarelal,

Lata's Pancham sur



R.D. Burman

Chitragupta, Salil Choudhury and S.D. Burman, but the RD-Lata liaison underscored the composer's USP of being *hatke* — especially in the solo lane.

True to the musical *Chhote Nawab*'s debut tradition, Lata was prime choice when the Czar of today's remix compilations went *raag*-wards, scoring the unforgettable *Raina beeti jaaye* (*Amar Prem*), the beautiful

Sawan ke jhoole pade (*Jurmana*) and the haunting *Mere naina sawan bhadon* (*Mehbooba*). In fact, Lata in RD-land could be cloyingly sweet, and this sweetness sometimes became a shade excessive, and thus unpalatable in songs like *Yeh faasle yeh dooriyaan* (*Zameen Aasmaan*), the screechy *Jahaan par savera ho* (*Baseraa*) and *Tere bina jiya jaaye na* (*Ghar*).

Pancham thus did associate Lata with intense melody right from his earliest days, getting her to vocalize such sterling beauties as *Aaja piya tohe pyaar doon* and *Kya jaanu sajan* (*Baharon Ke Sapne*), *Paar lagaa de mere* and *Sharabi sharabi* (*Chandan Ka Palna*), *Na jaa o mere humdum* (*Pyar Ka Mausam*), *Waadiyan mera daaman* (*Abhilasha*), *Na koi umang hai* (*Kati Patang*), *Kisi din hansana* (*Benaam*), *Main hoon diya sooni raaton ka* (*Jal Mahal*), *Tujhse naraaz nahin* (*Masoom*), *Bhor bhayi panchhi dhun yeh sunaaye* (*Aanchal*), *Tere liye palkon ki jhaalar* (*Harjaee*) and many more luminous collaborations.

If he ever did Lata a 'solo' injustice, it was when he got her to vie with Kishore Kumar in the same song

separately, in which Lata, despite her superior artistry, ended up with the pale 'worser'ion of *Phoolon ka taaro ka* (*Hare Rama Hare Krishna*), *Mere naina saawan bhadon* (*Mehbooba*) and *Hamein aur jeene ki* (*Agar Tum Na Hote*).

On the other hand, RD was in his element getting Didi to mischievously sing in the LP-mould in songs like *Main tawaif hoon mujra karoongi* (*Mehbooba*) and *Aina wohi rehta hai* (*Shalimar*)!

But to me, the cream of Lata under RD comprised of his adventurous compositions for the nightingale. As the flip side of Pancham's Lata record of intense and emotive melody came her zingy, naughty, playful, seductive and *joie-de-vivre* filled numbers that I cherish far more than all these undoubtedly musically superior but more orthodox numbers. Because if Pancham does not represent the antithesis of orthodoxy in film music, who does?

And thus the special place Pancham had in the Lata oeuvre would be primarily represented not by *raags*-toriches in melody but by utterly delicious memorabilia like *Bhai battur* (*Padosan*), *Dil ki lagi ko* (*Waris*), *Chalo ri* (*Mehbooba*), *Yaari ho gayi yaar se lak turu turu* (*Do Chor*), *Oye buddho lambo lambo* (*Buddha Mil Gaya*), *Do ghoomth mujhe bhi pila de sharab ke* (*Jheel Ke Us*

Paar), *Bangle ke peeche mere* (*Samadhi*), the *Pyar Ka Mausam* trio, *Aap chahe mujhko* and *Aapse miliye* and *Main na miloongi*, the passion-on-a-leash strains of *Jab tum chale jaaoge* (*Bullet*), *Baahon men chale aao* (*Anamika*), and *I am sorry* (*Warrant*).

For it is these songs that indicate the regard Pancham had, despite his Asha leanings, towards Lata's explosive range. And it is in these lovely compositions that RD went some steps ahead in his distinguished individuality.



Lata Mangeshkar